

# Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

## Department of Georgia

### **Americanism, Community Service, Hospital, Safety, Youth Reporting Guidelines**

#### PURPOSE

This document provides the VFW Department of Georgia guidelines for Community Service Reporting. For the purposes of this document, the term "Community Service" means Americanism, Safety, Youth Activities, Hospital Reports, and Community Service Reporting.

The purpose of the Community Service program is threefold:

- 1) To fulfill the purposes outlined in the VFW Congressional Charter
- 2) Promote the VFW within the community
- 3) To document what we've done for ourselves, Congress, the public, and the IRS

Within the scope of the Charter, the goal of the program is for your Post, as an organization, to be active and visible in your community. People in the community should see the VFW participating and volunteering.

#### MISCONCEPTIONS

"Everything I do is reportable." No, it is not.

Somewhere along the line the idea that anything nice anyone in your Post is reportable as "Community Service". This is not true. Only those things done by the Post or Post Members that promote the Veterans of Foreign Wars are reportable. Activities that Post members do on their own, regardless of the VFW, while laudable, are not to be reported. For example, driving your grandchild to school is definitely a worthwhile activity but is not a "VFW" activity. Working for the American Legion, the Marine Corps League, your church, or your HOA are great activities but they have nothing to do with the VFW.

Questions to help determine whether an activity is reportable

- 1) If someone who knows nothing about the VFW asked: *What does the VFW do?*  
"The VFW drives our grandchildren to school." No, that is not what the VFW does, that's what grandparents do. "The VFW goes to American Legion meetings..." No.  
"The VFW cleans my church...." No.
- 2) Could we advertise this in the newspaper and promote the VFW? "VFW members attend VFW meeting" would not be a headline that promotes the VFW mission.  
"VFW Conducts a Coat Drive for Homeless" is a VFW-promoting headline.
- 3) If you didn't show up to do this, would they call the VFW for a replacement or another organization. For example, if you volunteer to teach ballet and can't make it,

would they call the VFW Post and ask for help? Or would they find someone else at the school?

- 4) Was the activity discussed and planned at your Post meeting? If not, it may not be reportable.

#### Do Activities as a Group with Post/Auxiliary Membership

Likewise, making sure we are doing the right things, we need to do them as a Post. Your membership is to be working in the community. These programs should be bringing your membership together to work as a team in the community. That will build esprit de corps. It will also do wonders for your recruiting. People want to be part of a movement... a team. They can already go out and do things on their own, when you are doing things together, you build the camaraderie we all experienced during our time in the military.

In the recent past, 90+% of the activities reported have been individuals doing things on their own. We need to swing that percentage the other way. The majority of your community service should be as a group.

As a Post your goal must always be to do activities together with comrades. That builds camaraderie while, at the same time, magnifies the visibility of your organization.

#### Activity Reporting

Within each category are specific activities. We have outlined the Department's definition for each of these below:

<b>Report</b>	<b>What to Do</b>
Organize/Assist - Blood Drive or CPR Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host a community blood drive at your Post (or other location in the community) with your membership volunteering and donating blood</li> <li>- A group of Post members, wearing their VFW gear, assisting another organization with running a blood drive</li> <li>- A group of Post members, wearing their VFW gear, going as a group and donating blood</li> <li>- Host a community CPR class at your Post or a location in the community</li> <li>- Assist another organization with running a CPR class by volunteering as a group to help out.</li> <li>- Going as a group, wearing your VFW gear, to a local CPR class.</li> </ul>
Make A Difference Day 4 <sup>th</sup> Sat in Oct	<p>Date Specific. "Make a Difference Day". Organizations get together and do something out in their community. Your Post should plan an event (just like you would for an Americanism event) in the community.</p> <p>There are lots of organizations that do activities and it would be easy to partner with them if you need help getting started. Only activities conducted on or around this time should be reported. Examples might be cleaning up a city park, projects at a local veterans house, This is something you should already be thinking about for next October.</p>

<p>Aid to Person or Family with Tragedy / Illness</p>	<p>Assisting a family after a death or assisting a veteran's widow during an illness.</p> <p>Helping out a veteran who has lost his/her job.</p> <p>Assisting a military family after their house burned down - these kinds of things. Again, this should something the Post does.</p> <p>Any expense you vote on to help out a veteran in need is likely reportable here.</p>
<p>Hospital/Nursing Home Visits (Non Veteran)</p>	<p>This if for visits to <b>non-veterans</b>.</p> <p>If your Post goes and visits a veteran's widow or family member.</p> <p>Your Post hosts bingo or some other activity at a local nursing home or hospital.</p> <p>Again, this should be the Post going more than just individuals.</p>
<p>Speak at a Church/ Organization</p>	<p>Whenever a member of the Post represents the VFW by speaking at a church about veterans or military issues or support, report it here.</p> <p>Again, this should be a veteran or military related presentation. It could be a presentation about a program that your Post is conducting.</p> <p>When you speak at another organization, such as Kiwanis, JayCeas, etc. about the VFW and what the VFW does.</p> <p>Do <b>not</b> report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fundraising activities</li> <li>- attending other organizations (Legion, etc) unless you are wearing your VFW cap and telling them about VFW activities</li> </ul>
<p>Veterans Oral History Program</p>	<p>This is a specific program run by the Library of Congress.</p> <p>Go to <a href="http://www.loc.gov/vets/">www.loc.gov/vets/</a> to find out more about it.</p> <p>This involves interviewing elderly veterans to record their experiences and then submitting the interview to the Library of Congress.</p> <p>You should be doing this at the very least for your oldest Post members. Perpetuate the memory and history...</p>
<p>Service Officer Work</p>	<p>Post Service Officers report the details of they spend working with veterans. This must be volunteer time.</p> <p>Do not report if this is your job or you are paid for providing this service.</p>
<p>Other Community Service Projects</p>	<p>Your Post, wearing their VFW gear, working as a team with another local organization.</p> <p>It could be Meals on Wheels, the local Food Bank, the USO, a local riders group, Relay for Life, etc.</p> <p>Projects that your Post membership coordinates and works together.</p> <p>Include any disaster preparedness/relief activities that your Post does as a group.</p>
<p><b>Americanism</b></p>	

Loyalty Day May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Date Specific - A day to reaffirm loyalty to the United States of America. This should be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited.
Memorial Day <i>Last Monday in May</i>	Date Specific - A day to honor those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice. This should be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited.
Independence Day <i>July 4</i>	Date Specific - A day to celebrate the USA's birthday. This should be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited.
Patriot Day <i>September 11</i>	Date Specific - a national day of service and remembrance in honor of those killed on 9/11/2001.  This should be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited. This is one where it is possible to support activities by the Police or Fire Department.
Color/Honor Guard	When your Post provides a color or honor guard for an event (e.g., National Day of Prayer).
Flag Retirement	Conducting a Flag Retirement Ceremony. It should be advertised and the community invited.  You can report assisting another organization, such as the Scouts, with retiring US flags when you do so as a VFW group wearing your VFW gear.  This should be more than just attending a ceremony, the VFW should be involved in the ceremony.
Veterans Day <i>November 11</i>	Date Specific - A day to honor all veterans of the US military. This should be a program your Post does in the community where the community is invited.
Pearl Harbor Day <i>December 7</i>	Date Specific - A day to honor and remember those lost at Pearl Harbor. This should be a program your Post does in the community where the community is invited.
Wreaths Across America <i>Typically the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in December</i>	Date Specific - This is an opportunity to volunteer as a Post to help lay wreaths at a National Cemetery or to host a program in your local community. You can order wreaths for your local memorials.  A donation to the Wreaths Across America program would be reported here.
Buddy Poppy Distribution	Record each of your Buddy Poppy drives here when a group of your members get together to distribute Buddy Poppies.
Flag Day <i>June 14</i>	Date Specific - A day to honor our Colors. This should be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited.
VFW Day <i>September 29</i>	Date Specific - the VFW's birthday. This should be something your Post does <b>in the community</b> that acknowledges and promotes the VFW where the community is invited.

Get Out the Vote	<p>Doing something <b>in the community</b> to encourage people to vote in a local, state or federal election. This could include picking up members and driving them to the polling places.</p> <p>Hosting a town hall at the Post that is advertised to the public is reportable.</p> <p>Do not report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campaigning for specific candidates</li> </ul>
POW/MIA Recognition Day 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday in Sept	<p>Date Specific - A day to recognize those veterans who were or are prisoners of war or are missing in action. This could be a program your Post does <b>in the community</b> where the community is invited.</p> <p>It could be working with local restaurants /organizations to set up POW/MIA tables in the community.</p>
Teacher Nomination to District	<p><del>Capture time/effort spent on recognizing your</del> Teacher of the Year entries</p>
Other Americanism Project	<p>Any Americanism project your Post participates in the community. For example, your Post membership participating in an Armed Forces Day program in the community is the type of event you would report here.</p> <p>Report flag presentations here.</p> <p>Distributing patriotic literature at an event. For example, your Post members, wearing their VFW covers, distribute copies of the US Constitution to new US citizens.</p>
<b>Safety</b>	
Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety	<p>Promoting pedestrian and or bicycle safety <b>in your community</b>.</p> <p>Your Post could organize a bicycle rodeo or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Home/Fire Safety	<p>Promoting home or fire safety <b>in your community</b>.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Child Safety	<p>Promoting safety <b>in your community</b> with an emphasis on children.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their gear.</p>
Recreation/ Boating	<p>Promoting recreation or boating safety <b>in your community</b>.</p>

	<p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Recognize Fireman/ Policeman/ EMT	<p>Conduct a program to recognize local public safety workers.</p> <p>Submit them for State recognition.</p>
Drug Awareness	<p>Promoting drug awareness <b>in your community</b>.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Highway Safety	<p>Promoting highway safety <b>in your community</b>.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Firearm/Hunting Safety	<p>Promoting firearm and/or hunting safety <b>in your community</b>.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates wearing their VFW gear.</p>
Other Safety Program	<p>Promoting safety <b>in your community</b> that doesn't fit in one of the other programs.</p> <p>Your Post could organize an event or pass out safety literature as part of a larger event.</p> <p>You can also support the efforts of another local organization if your Post membership participates.</p>
<b>Youth Activities</b>	
Sports / Activities	<p>Your Post can sponsor a team.</p> <p>The membership wearing their VFW gear helping out at a local youth event.</p>
Scouting/ Other Youth Organizations	<p>Sponsor and or support a local youth organization. This is not one person volunteering because their child is in the organization.</p> <p>It is the Post membership involved with the organization.</p> <p>The Scout of the Year recognition program is a great way for your Post to get involved.</p> <p>Other organizations include: Civil Air Patrol, Sea Scouts, 4H, Youth Service America, Junior Achievement...</p>

Youth Center	Having your Post membership involved with a Boys and Girls Club or other youth center, promoting patriotism as a VFW Post.
Citizenship Education/ Instruction	Anytime Post members visit a school to speak in the classroom (as long as they are visiting and not employed there). Speakers should be wearing their VFW caps if at all possible. It's even better if a couple of Post members go together to speak.  Teaching children about the Flag.  Do not report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities to do with Smart Maher Citizenship Education program. Report those under Americanism.</li> </ul>
Youth Recognition	Any local programs where your Post recognizes local youth in a program not otherwise listed here.
Voice of Democracy	Use this for efforts your Post members put into the Voice of Democracy program: advertising the program, distributing information, organizing entries, presenting awards. Include any money spent on prizes for students.
Patriots Pen	Use this for the efforts your Post members put into the Patriot's Pen program: advertising the program, distributing information, organizing entries, presenting awards. Include any money spent on prizes for students.
JROTC	Use this for Post involvement with JROTC units. This can be presenting JROTC awards at local high schools and other activities where your Post membership interacts with the JROTC program.  If one of your Post members is employed as the JROTC instructor at the high school, their time is not reported because they are doing it as their job, not as a VFW member.
Other Youth Activities Projects	Any activity where the Post is engaged with youth that does not fit in one of the other categories.
<b>Hospital Reports (Veterans)</b>	Submit these reports whenever your Post membership goes to visit <b>veterans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At their home</li> <li>- At a VA Hospital or nursing home</li> <li>- At a community hospital or nursing home</li> </ul> <p>Example: The Department of Georgia hosts the W W Jones Cookout every year the Saturday before Mother's Day at the Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville.</p>

Things you cannot report.

- Activities you do for your church because you are a church member
- Activities for which you are paid
- Activities that are part of your job
- Fundraising activities other than Buddy Poppy Drives, which are reported under Americanism

- VFW meetings (Post, District, State) or VFW training

### **Filling Out the Report**

Find the reports by going to VFWGA.com. Click on Resources, then Online Reporting. You will see a link that says *Submit Online Reports*, click it.

Log into your Post's account.

Username is your Post number (e.g., 2667)

Password is "Post999" (where 999 is your Post number. E.g., post2667). No spaces, no capital letters.

Click on Submit Reports

Select the type of Report to submit.

Enter the date of the activity, or choose it from the calendar.

Check the Auxiliary box if at least one member of your Auxiliary participated.

Enter the total number of VFW and Auxiliary members who participated.

*e.g., 14 members*

Enter the total number of hours spent by everyone on the project.

*e.g., 14 members at 1 hour each = 14 hours*

Enter the total miles driven by everyone on the project.

When more than one member rode together, only record the miles once.

If you claim miles, you cannot claim gasoline expenses.

*147 total miles (add the miles for each member)*

Enter the cost of the event. This includes Post money spent, donations by members.

Do not include money spent on raffles or products purchased for individuals.

*e.g., Post cost was \$157.23*

Description of Event. Give the who, what, where, when, why of the event. If you have large miles or expenses, explain them. Reports with large numbers and no explanation will be rejected.

If you have a Facebook page or website and have pictures of your event on it, include a link to the site at the end of your description. Department may link to it or share the pictures on the Department social media or webpage.